

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the Examiner's confirmation of receipt of Applicants' claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

The Examiner noted that Applicants have not filed a certified copy of the priority application as required by 35 U.S.C. § 119(b). The certified copy will be filed shortly.

Claims 1 and 3-15 remain in the application. Claim 1 and 3 have been amended. Claim 2 has been canceled to facilitate prosecution of the instant application.

In "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102" on pages 2-4 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 1 and 7-14 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,116,021 to Schumacher et al. (hereinafter Schumacher) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

In "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102" on pages 4-6 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 4-15 have been rejected as being

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fully anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,256,983 to Yasui under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

The rejections have been noted and the claims have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Support for the changes is found in the original claims of the instant application.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the Examiner's statement in "Allowable Subject Matter" on page 6 of the above-identified Office Action that claims 2 and 3 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims."

Accordingly, claim 2 has been canceled and the subject matter thereof has been added to claim 1. In addition, the subject matter of claims 1 and 2 has been added to claim 3. Claims 2 and 3 now are in independent form and contain the subject matter indicated as being allowable.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1 and 3. Claims 1 and

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3 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on independent claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 and 3-15 are solicited.

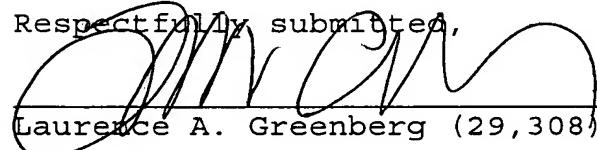
In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

In "Allowable Subject Matter" the Examiner has also stated that Applicant is encouraged to submit formal drawings. However, the Examiner is requested to review the drawings because it is believed that the drawings were formal as originally filed.

If an extension of time is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Any extension fee associated therewith should be charged to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

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Please charge any other fees that might be due with respect
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner
and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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LAG/bb
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